

*Working in partnership with  
the citizens of Henrico County  
to create the conditions for  
health*

## ***Public Health Bytes***

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On the web at: [www.publichealthbytes.org](http://www.publichealthbytes.org)

### **PANDEMIC ALERT PHASE: 3**

**Communicable Diseases Update:** *Mumps:* The US midsection has been experiencing a significant outbreak of mumps since December 2005. Two confirmed mumps cases have been identified in Northern and NW Virginia and others are now under investigation. There is nothing unusual about the currently circulating strain of mumps (Genotype G) and the MMR vaccine in use should be protective against this strain. CDC is concerned about potentially infectious people who recently traveled from the Midwest by airline to other parts of the country. Transmission of mumps virus occurs by direct contact with respiratory droplets, saliva or contact with contaminated fomites. The incubation period is generally 16-18 days (range 12-25 days) from exposure to onset of symptoms. The principal strategy to prevent mumps is to achieve and maintain high immunization levels. The Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) recommends that all preschool aged children 12 months of age and older receive one dose of measles-mumps-rubella vaccine (MMR) and all school-aged children receive two doses of MMR, and to ensure that all adults have evidence of immunity against mumps. **We do not have any evidence to suggest a local outbreak of mumps in Henrico County at this time.** However, practitioners are asked to promptly report suspected cases to allow us to identify contacts and implement control measures. Guidelines for diagnosis, vaccination indications and contraindications, and exclusion from school/work (9 days after symptom onset) will be posted at [www.publichealthbytes.org](http://www.publichealthbytes.org). In addition, CDC has set up an information portal on mumps at <http://www.cdc.gov/nip/diseases/mumps/default.htm>. *Influenza Update:* We appear to be on the tail end of the influenza season. Virginia is now reporting only "local" activity as of 4/22/06 and our local surveillance in Henrico appears consistent.

**Alert:** "Heroin" overdoses in NJ, MD, Philadelphia and Chicago not heroin - Previous clusters of heroin overdoses in these areas have raised suspicion of adulteration. CDC has issued the following alert: "Preliminary reports from Maryland and New Jersey reveal that samples of the confiscated drug contain little or no heroin; fentanyl (or methyl fentanyl) and procaine were identified in the samples. News reports from Chicago reveal an ongoing outbreak of overdoses and laboratory reports of methyl fentanyl in the implicated substance. An excess of 60 cases over the number expected have been reported in New Jersey as of 4/24/2006. Philadelphia also reported a similar outbreak over the weekend of April 22-23. If clinical cases suspicious for fentanyl or procaine overdose are identified, please notify your local health department and poison control immediately."

**Environmental Health:** *Jet fuel leak:* The residents of the Barrington subdivision and surrounding areas in Western Henrico have been dealing with a large turbine fuel leak since April 17th. The fuel is predominantly jet fuel JP-8 and was being transported through underground pipelines that run through Western Henrico. Fortunately, JP-8 exposure is not known to result in any long term health consequences. The acute exposure toxicity is primarily related to ingestion, inhalation and skin contact. The primary manifestations of acute contact and inhalation toxicity include local irritation and manifestations of CNS depression which readily resolve with removal of the exposure. As the cleanup continues, you may be asked questions about health effects of jet fuel exposure. We will place resource materials on our website at [www.publichealthbytes.org](http://www.publichealthbytes.org). *Drinking Water contamination:* All residents on public water systems receive an annual water quality report from the water operator. Henrico County recently released the 2005 report. In addition to private wells, some Henrico residents are part of smaller private water systems separate from the county system. Occasionally, a water operator will receive a notice of violation from the VDH Office of Drinking Water as a result of noncompliance with the regulations governing operation of a public water system. Some violations require that the operator distribute a public notice to all of its customers. The notices might be informational or may request specific actions for the customer to take to protect their health (e.g. boil water notice when microbial contamination is identified). Some issues, such as recent concern about uranium in water, result from the fact that naturally occurring uranium deposits are present in our area. Periodic water monitoring may reveal variations in levels that exceed current regulatory limits. Safe uranium limits (30 mcg/L) had not been established by EPA until 2003. Prior to that monitoring was performed but only a "recommended" limit (100 mcg/L) was established. As a result of such issues and the public notices generated, patients may bring their questions and concerns to their personal health care provider. The local health department can assist you in these situations. We will post an information sheet concerning known Uranium health effects and established limits at [www.publichealthbytes.org](http://www.publichealthbytes.org). See also <http://www.epa.gov/safewater/rads/quickguide.pdf>

**Emergency Preparedness Update:** Henrico Health District expects to receive additional funding for pandemic influenza preparedness activities through the end of August, 2006. We will use any additional resources to augment existing planning efforts and to coordinate the many plans that are being developed by multiple entities. We request additional physician involvement in local planning and would be willing to work with medical practices to assist in your practice plans.

*Prepared by Mike Magner, MPH, Mark J. Levine, MD MPH*